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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 003542

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR WHA/AND AND WHA/BSC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/23/2014

TAGS: [KDEM PHUM PREL VE AR MEETINGS WITH AMBASSADOR](#)

SUBJECT: RAISING VENEZUELA WITH ARGENTINA MFA

REF: A. STATE 271087

[B](#). BUENOS AIRES 3523

[C](#). BUENOS AIRES 3489

Classified By: DCM Hugo Llorens for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[11](#). (C) Ambassador Gutierrez met December 23 with Argentine Foreign Minister Rafael Bielsa to raise again our concerns about recent events in Venezuela. The Ambassador began by noting that in his meeting with Secretary Powell, Bielsa had stated that President Kirchner and the GOA would use every opportunity to engage with President Chavez on human rights, democracy and governance issues. The Ambassador then took Bielsa through the issues raised in Reftel A, namely, the new law on media content; the packing of the Venezuelan Supreme Court; the draft law that would criminalize the use of foreign funding by Venezuelan human rights and civil society NGOs; the criminal case against the leaders of the NGO Sumate; and finally, the need for Venezuela to work cooperatively with Colombia to secure their shared border.

[12](#). (C) Bielsa responded first to the border security issue stating that at the Cuzco Summit earlier this month, Colombian President Uribe had specifically praised Chavez for his cooperation on border security. Bielsa said he thought things were "going better" on this count. On the other issues, Bielsa thanked the Ambassador for our comments and concerns and said he would further investigate each of them. He felt, however, that there was little the GOA could do with the recently passed media law and the Supreme Court appointments as these were now accomplished "judicial" facts. He thought there might be more room for maneuver on the draft law on NGO funding and the pending Sumate case. He promised to look closely at these cases and to raise these issues with President Kirchner for his possible discussion with Chavez.

[13](#). (C) As he was leaving, the Ambassador congratulated Bielsa for his efforts on behalf of Cuban dissident Hilda Molina (reftels). Bielsa, who according to some press accounts was in danger of being fired by President Kirchner, thanked the Ambassador and said supporting Molina's request to visit her son and his family was "the right thing to do." When the Ambassador noted that human rights was something that cannot be applied selectively, Bielsa concurred adding "we'll see how much more President Kirchner can bear."

[14](#). (U) For other Embassy Buenos Aires reporting, please visit our classified SIPRNET website at <http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/wha/buenosaires>.< /a>
GUTIERREZ